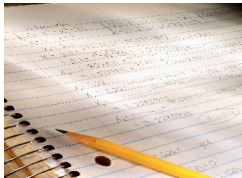


### District Approaches to Improving Tennessee's High Priority Schools: *Fayette County*



Despite an overall increase in achievement scores over the past several years, Fayette County continues to struggle with significant academic challenges, particularly in math. Poor math performance placed two of the system's schools – Fayette-Ware Comprehensive High School and Central Elementary – on the state's high priority list for the 2005-06 school year. Both schools' achievement scores improved the following year, but they remain on the state's high priority list. New principals took the helm at both of these schools for the 2006-07 school year.

#### **Report Findings:**

- Some of Fayette County's strategic planning documents lack specificity and do not reflect an evolving strategic planning process
- Despite district opportunities for parental involvement, parental participation rates in the two schools remain low; low parental participation is a significant barrier to improving student achievement
- Frequent principal turnover at Fayette-Ware Comprehensive High School over the last five years has hindered the formation of stable school leadership; this lack of stability limits the school's ability to fully implement and realize school improvement efforts
- Teacher retention remains a major problem and appears to have worsened since OEA's 2001 review; according to the district recruitment and retention plan, teacher "recruitment efforts have been fairly successful, however, retention has been disastrous"
- Although district officials have targeted the graduation rate for improvement, they have not attempted to capture all available funding to address this problem
- The system recently hired additional technology staff but still lacks enough employees to handle its technology needs
- No students accessed supplemental educational services under No Child Left Behind for the 2005-06 school year; instead, parents and students opted for the after-school tutoring programs provided by the district

#### **Recommendations for District Officials:**

Fayette County Schools should:

- Revise certain strategic planning documents to include specific strategies, more precise performance measures, and clearer lines of responsibility
- Set a specific goal for improving parental participation rates over the next two years and implement research-based programs in this area
- Create a monitoring system to ensure the system seeks out and attempts to secure all available external funding, particularly for reducing the dropout rate
- Increase the amount of computer technical support available

View the full report at <http://www.comptroller.state.tn.us/cpdivorea.htm>

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Comptroller of the Treasury